SITREP.05.03

A SITUATION REPORT ON EMERGENCY TRANSBOUNDARY OUTBREAK PESTS (ETOPS) FOR MAY WITH A FORECAST TILL MID-JULY, 2003

SUMMARY

1. **Summary:** This report provides an update on the situation of emergency transboundary outbreak pests (ETOPs) in May in Africa, the Middle-East, Central and Southwest Asia, and Latin America. Key ETOPs, including locusts, grasshoppers, armyworm and grain-eating red-billed *Quelea* birds are covered by the report. A brief overview of the current status of each of these pests is outlined in the remainder of this summary with detailed accounts and a six-week forecast provided thereafter.

DESERT LOCUST, *SCHISTOCERCA GREGARIA (*FORSKAL)

2. **Desert locusts, *Schistocerca gregaria* (Forskal)**. As a result of unfavorable ecological conditions that persisted during the reporting month, the locust situation remained fairly calm in most of the outbreak areas in western and northwestern Africa. A few scattered solitary adults were seen in northern Mali and southeastern Libya, however, significant developments are not likely during the forecast period.

3. With the exception of a few isolated adults seen in southern Egypt and northern Oman, locusts were not reported in the Greater Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula in May. Breeding condition began improving in the summer breeding areas in Sudan, eastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia. Unfavorable conditions persisted in the other outbreak and invasion areas in May. Small-scale breeding may occur in parts of Sudan and perhaps, northern Somalia. The rest of the regions will likely remain calm during the forecast period.

4. Unfavorable breeding conditions persisted throughout the month in the summer breeding areas in the Eastern Region desert locust outbreak areas in May. Significant locust activities are not expected during the forecast period.

OTHER LOCUSTS AND GRASSHOPPERS.

5. **Red locusts, *Nomadacris septemfasciata* (Surville):** An unconfirmed locust swarm was reported on May 27, 2003 in Mabote district, Inhambane Province, Mozambique. Grass burning that is commencing in June will likely continue to force the locusts to congregate in a few patches of green vegetation in the Iku-Katavi and Wembere outbreak areas where very few swarmlets may be formed. The situation in the other outbreak areas remained relatively calm in May and will likely continue to be so during the forecast period. Red locust activities were not reported from Madagascar in May.

It is highly likely that locust numbers will remain low during the forecast period. Nevertheless, routine survey and monitoring are recommended to avoid any surprises.

6. **Madagascar migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria capito* (L.).** No locusts were reported in Madagascar in May. With the ecological conditions remaining relatively dry, it is likely that locust activities will remain calm during the forecast period.

7. Some ***Zonocerus variegatus*** (L) activities were reported in Kolda region, Senegal. Mixed populations of the African Migratory Locust, ***Locusta migratoria migratorioides*** (L.), and the desert locusts were seen on crop fields in southern Egypt in May. No reports were received on the tree locust, ***Anacridium melanorhodon*** (Walker), the Senegalese grasshopper, ***Oedaleus senegalensis*** (Krauss) or brown locust, ***Locustana pardalina*** (Walker). It is likely that this remain so during the forecast period.

8. **Moroccan locust, Dociostaurus maroccanus *(*Thunberg) and Italian locust, *Calliptamus italicus* (L).** **Widespread infestations of the hoppers of the Moroccan locust occurred in Samangana, Kunduz, and Balkh, Afghanistan infesting crop fields and causing damage.** Hoppers were seen on fallow land and pasture areas during the surveys that were conducted between Baghlan, Samangan and Ajirim Gorge area in the third dekad of May. Most of these areas are not cultivated and the locusts are not expected to pose immediate threat to crops. Isolated instances of egg-laying have been reported in Kunduz and Samangan. Control operations using diflubenzuron are in progress. **Unmarked mines in most of the infested areas in Khanabad, Kunduz province make it difficult to implement survey and control efforts.** There is a likelihood of increased locust activities, which could pose more threats to crops during the forecast period. Active survey, monitoring, and early interventions using the most appropriate and safe methods will be essential to avert any significant crop loss.

9. **Armyworm, *Spodoptera exempta* (Walker).** There were no reports of armyworm outbreaks in the DLCO-EA or the IRLCO-CSA region in May. With the onset of the summer rains there is a likelihood of limited armyworm activities in Kenya and northern Tanzania during the forecast period.

10. **Red-billed quelea, *Quelea quelea* (L.).** Quelea birds continued being a problem to small grain cereal crop growers in Tanzania in May. The birds were reported causing damage to paddy rice in Mbarali and Kaputa Rice Schemes in Mbeya region and also in some areas in Dodoma region. Control operations were being implemented by the National Plant Protection, Tanzania, in collaboration with the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) at the time this report was complied. Quelea birds have also begun migrating into Narok District, Kenya where they could possibly damage to wheat crops planned on more than 54,000 ha. The MoA staff is monitoring quelea populations to avert any major damage to the wheat crops at maturity.

It is likely that these birds could continue causing a problem to cereal crops in the traditional outbreak areas in Tanzania, Kenya, and other countries during the forecast period. Survey and monitoring are essential to avert any damage. End of Summary.

ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION: WEATHER AND ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

11. The Western and Northwestern regions remained fairly hot and dry in May. Cloud formations were observed over southern Morocco, Mali, Niger and Chad. Light rains were reported in Gao Mali. No further rain was reported in May and conditions are expected to remain dry during the forecast period except in Chad and parts of Mali.

12. Light to medium rains were reported in

May in the summer breeding in the Central Region. Rain fell in Darfur, Kordofan, Kassala, and Khartoum Provinces, Sudan, the Western Desert, Egypt, eastern Ethiopia, and northern Somalia. Conditions are expected to improve in these areas. Other countries in the region remained fairly dry unfavorable conditions persisted.

13. The summer breeding areas in the Eastern Region desert locust outbreak areas continued to experience hot, dry weather. Unfavorable conditions persisted throughout the month except light showers that fell in a few places in Rajasthan, India. It is likely that unfavorable conditions will persistent unless monsoon rains commence.

14. Ecological conditions remained generally dry in the red locust outbreak areas during the month except the cyclone that hit Madagascar. Isolated showers occurred in some of the outbreak areas. The rainy season has come to an end in most of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region. The Inter Tropical Convergence Zone was active only over the northern part of the region, but no significant precipitation was reported.

DESERT LOCUST ACTIVITIES

15. **Western and Northwestern Africa Outbreak Region:** As a result of unfavorable ecological conditions the locust situation remained fairly calm in May in most of the areas in western and northwestern Africa. A few scattered solitary adults were seen in northern Mali and southeastern Libya. Significant developments are not likely during the forecast period. Locusts were not reported in Morocco, Algeria, Niger, Mauritania, Chad, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Guinea Conakry during the reporting month.

16. Forecast: A few isolated adults may be seen in areas of green vegetation in Mali, Chad, and Niger. The situation will remain relatively calm in the other countries during the forecast period

17. **Eastern Africa, Northeastern Africa, and the Near East Outbreak Region:** With the exception of a few isolated adults seen in southern Egypt and northern Oman, locusts were not reported in the summer breeding areas in northeastern Africa, the Greater Horn and the Arabian Peninsula in May. Breeding condition began improving in parts of Sudan, eastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia. Unfavorable conditions persisted in the other outbreak and invasion areas in May.

18. Forecast: Small-scale breeding may occur in parts of Sudan and perhaps, northern Somalia. The rest of the regions will likely remain calm during the forecast period.

19. **Eastern Region Outbreak Areas:** As a result of unfavorable breeding conditions that persisted throughout the month, no locusts were reported in this region in May.

20. Forecast: Significant activities are not expected during the forecast period.

OTHER LOCUST AND GRASSHOPPER ACTIVITIES

21. **Moroccan locust, Dociostaurus maroccanus (Thunberg) and Italian locust, *Calliptamus italicus* (L). Widespread hatchings of the Moroccan locust that occurred in Samangana, Kunduz, and Balkh, Afghanistan in late March and early**

April gave rise to hopper bands that began infesting crop fields and causing damage. Hoppers were observed in most of the outbreak regions above 2000 meters. Scattered, low density Moroccan locusts were also found along the river valleys, below 1200m. Hoppers were seen on fallow land and pasture areas during the surveys that were carried out between Baghlan and Samangan in the third dekad of May. Some flying locusts have also been seen in the Ajirim Gorge, which cuts through the chain of hills that separates this area from the Amu Darya valley and the Khayrabad area. Most of these areas are not cultivated and the locusts are not expected to pose immediate danger to crops. Isolated instances of egg-laying have been reported in Kunduz and Samangan.

An infestation of flying adults also appeared unexpectedly in Kelagai (Baghlan), where they are reported causing crop damage. Control operations using diflubenzuron are in progress at the time this report was compiled. **Unmarked mines in most of the infested areas in Khanabad, Kunduz province make it difficult to implement survey and control efforts.** There is a likelihood of increased locust activities, which could threaten crops in these areas during the forecast period. Active survey, monitoring, and early interventions using the most appropriate and safe methods will be essential to avert any significant crop loss.

22. Forecast: It is likely that numbers of locusts will increase during the forecast period and continue threatening crops, if early intervention is not implemented in the outbreak areas. Increased activities may be seen in some of the areas in these regions. Vigilant survey, monitoring, and early intervention using the most appropriate and safe tools will be essential to avert any major crop loss that could occur as a result of invasions by this pest.

23. **Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)**. No reports were received on locusts or grasshoppers in LAC countries in May.

24. Forecast. No significant developments are expected during the forecast period.

25. **Red locust, *N. septemfasciata* (Surville).** An unconfirmed locust swarm was reported on May 27, 2003 in Mabote district, Inhambane Province, Mozambique. The red locust infestations that were reported earlier in Iku-Katavi and Wembere outbreak areas, Tanzania subsided. Grass burning that is commencing in June will likely continue to force the locusts to congregate in a few patches of green vegetation in the Iku-Katavi and Wembere outbreak areas where small swarms may be formed.

26. **Forecast:** The situation in the other outbreak areas remained relatively calm in May and will likely remain so during the forecast period. Red locust activities were not reported from Madagascar in May. Nevertheless, routine survey and monitoring are recommended to avoid any surprises. It is likely that the overall population will decline in most of the outbreak areas during the forecast period due to the onset of the dry season. Significant locust activities are not expected during the forecast period. Nevertheless, some increase in number of locusts may be seen in a few pockets of green vegetation. Vigilant surveillance and monitoring are in order

27. **Madagascar migratory locust, *L. migratoria capito* (L.).** No reports were received on the Madagascar migratory locust in May. With breeding conditions remaining

relatively dry, it is unlikely that locust activities will remain minimized. However, survey and monitoring are recommended during the forecast period.

28. **Brown locust, *L. pardalina* (Walker)**: Brown locust activities continued to be calm in the traditional outbreak regions in the Karoo regions in Namibia South Africa. Unless, rain falls in these areas, the situation will not change during the forecast period.

ARMYWORM ACTIVITIES

29. **Armyworm, *S. exempta* (Walker).** There were no reports of armyworm outbreaks in the DLCO-EA or the IRLCO-CSA region in May.

30. Forecast: With the onset of the summer rains in Kenya and northern Tanzania, there is a likelihood of increased armyworm activities during the forecast period. The pest may also be seen in Ethiopia, Uganda and other great lakes countries.

QUELEA BIRD ACTIVITIES

31. **Red-billed quelea, *Q. quelea* (L).** Quelea birds continued being a problem to small grain cereal crop growers in Tanzania in May. The birds were reported causing damage to paddy rice in Mbarali and Kaputa Rice Schemes in Mbeya region and also in some areas in Dodoma region. Control operations were being implemented by the National Plant Protection, Tanzania, in collaboration with the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) at the time this report was complied. Quelea birds have also begun migrating into Narok District, Kenya where they could possibly damage to wheat crops planned on more than 54,000 ha. The MoA staff is monitoring quelea populations to avert any major damage to the wheat crops at maturity.

32. Forecast: It is likely that Quelea birds will continue causing a problem to cereal crops in the traditional outbreak areas in Tanzania, Kenya, and other countries during the forecast period. Survey and monitoring are essential to avert any damage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

33. During the reporting month, only a few of the ETOP outbreaks, mainly quelea birds, warranted substantial control efforts, however, had these been left unaddressed, they could have increased to levels that pose serious threats to crops and pasture. It is evident that a minimum shift in the balance of subsistence production system, can significantly affect the already precarious food security in most of the ETOP outbreak areas. Therefore, it is important that regular monitoring, surveillance and reporting are maintained and results communicated promptly to the appropriate bodies within the national, regional and international structures.

Note: The end of the current drought and/or dry spell in Southern Africa and other outbreak regions would likely trigger serious ETOP developments in most of these areas and could lead to massive infestations and subsequent crop damage. Therefore, regular survey, monitoring, and reporting are highly recommended to avert any such invasions.

ACTION REQUESTED AND CONTACT INFORMATION

34. The Africa Emergency Locust/ Grasshopper Assistance (AELGA) project, previously managed by the USAID's Bureau

for Africa (AFR), has been transferred to the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) and is being managed by the Office for US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). AELGA continuous to work closely with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Migratory Pest Unit and other entities, USAID bilateral and regional missions, DLCO-EA, IRLOC-CSA, host country ministries, and research establishments, and Southern Africa Development Community Drought Monitoring Center (SADC/DMC). Information on ETOPs is regularly collected from these and other entities, including the Information Core for Southern Africa Migratory Pests (ICOSAMP) to continuously monitor and analyze the potential risks for large-scale emergency outbreaks, and compile and disseminate as [AELGA] SITREPS to all interested parties. Unsolicited reports or information about ETOP situations and activities in your region or country are always warmly welcome and much appreciated.

35. **Missions with programs and portfolios on food security, agriculture, environment and related activities are solicited to encourage their host country counterparts to send us regular updates on ETOP activities as often as possible. FEWS field personnel are also solicited to send us any information they may secure on ETOP activities in their countries and/or regions of responsibility. Regional organizations with ETOPS mandate and host country partners are kindly requested to forward their reports by the last day of the reporting month or within the first three days of the forecasting months. Please, forward reports, information, questions, and/or requests to: Dr. Yene T. Belayneh, ybelayneh@ofda.net FAX: 202-347-0315 (USA).** A copy to Drs. Joe Vorgetts, jvorgetts@usaid.gov and Harry Battenberg, hbattenberg@afr-sd.org is appreciated.

For more information on the weather conditions, you may visit the following web sites:

http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/faoinfo/economic/giews/economic/engslish/esahel/sehtoc.htm

http://www.fews.net

For more information on ETOP activities, you may visit:

http://www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/locuhom.htm/

http://www.english/newsroom/news/2002/5000-en.htm/
http://www.web.agr.ac.uk/directory/NRI/pcs/

http://www-web.gre.ac.uk/directory/NRI/quel/

http://icosamp.ecoport.org/

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AELGA'S ACTIVITIES, VISIT US AT OUR WEB SITE: WWW.AELGA.NET

UPCOMING EVENT

Interregional Trainer Training Course on Alternative Application Strategies and Tactics (AAST) for acridid control, in 2003. **Those interested can contact Dr. Yeneneh T. Belayneh, via e-mail: ybelayneh@ofda.net sd.org or phone: 202-661-9374 and fax: 202-347-0315 (USA)**

Erratum: Please, note that the locust invasion in Afghanistan that was reported in SITREP 04.03 was Moroccan locust not Italian locust.

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